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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/004,427	12/06/2001	Subrahmanyam V. Yerramilli	044574-5003-2	8735
9629	7590	10/20/2004	EXAMINER	
MORGAN LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP 1111 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW WASHINGTON, DC 20004			AKHAVAN, RAMIN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1636	
DATE MAILED: 10/20/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/004,427

Applicant(s)

YERRAMILLI ET AL.

Examiner

Ramin (Ray) Akhavan

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 July 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgment is made of Remarks filed, 07/26/2004, as a result of which claims 14, 19, 24, 25, 34 and 35 are amended and new claim 37 is added. Claims 14-37 are pending and under consideration in this action.

Any objections/rejections not repeated herein are hereby withdrawn. Where applicable a response to Applicants' arguments will be included in the body of objections/rejections maintained. As no new grounds of rejection are set forth, **this action is made FINAL.**

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

- 1. Claims 14-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.**

Applicants' assertion that the specification provides adequate description of the claimed invention is not deemed persuasive, thus this rejection is maintained for reasons of record, which are repeated herein. A response to Applicants' arguments is included below. (Infra, Response to Arguments). The claims are drawn to methods of identifying an agent that modulates a sterile

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inflammatory disease in a patient or modulates glomerulonephritis in a patient, where granulocytes or polymorphonuclear leukocytes are isolated from the patient and treated with an agent with subsequent examination of a gene expression profile, which is compared to an expression profile from non-treated cells. The claims are drawn to the critical element of the expression profile necessarily correlating with a sterile inflammatory disease and that a change in the expression profile for a gene or a combination of genes necessarily “modulates” (e.g. treatment, exacerbation, amelioration, etc.) a sterile inflammatory disease (e.g. psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, etc.). As such the claims are drawn to a genus comprising a combination of genes, or for that matter to a single change, for which a given alteration in expression (i.e. up or down) necessarily correlates to “modulation”. The written description requirement for a claimed genus may be satisfied by sufficient description of a representative number of species by actual reduction to practice, reduction to drawings or by disclosure relevant identifying characteristics, i.e. structure or other physical and/or chemical properties, by functional characteristics coupled with a known or disclosed correlation between function and structure or by a combination of such identifying characteristics sufficient to show applicant was in possession of the claimed genus.

The teachings of the specification appear to be limited to preparation of expression profiles for granulocytes isolated from normal donor peripheral blood, where the cells are subsequently exposed to virulent and avirulent bacteria (*in vitro*), and a comparison is made of the expression profiles in the two groups of cells. (e.g. Spec. at p. 22, Example 1). In addition, the teachings disclose expression-profile comparison of neutrophils isolated from normal donor and a patient suffering from an undisclosed inflammatory disease. (Spec., pp. 57-58, Example 4).

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Thus, the specification does not actually provide identification of a gene or combination of genes, for which the expression profile is altered when cells are treated with a particular agent, resulting in “modulation” of a sterile inflammatory disease.

There are inflammatory disease-related genes that have been examined in tissue from patients suffering from inflammatory disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis. (e.g. Heller et al. PNAS, 1997 March ; 94 :2150-55; see whole article; hereinafter Heller). For example, peripheral cDNA library has been used to identify genes expressed by lymphocytes infiltrating the inflamed tissues (i.e. in RA disease). (e.g. Heller, p. 2154, col. 2, ¶ 2). However, the art does not teach which gene(s) necessarily would lead to a modulation of disease in a patient, where isolated cells are treated with an agent *in vitro* to compare expression profiles to untreated cells.

In sum, given the enormous breadth of the genes or combination of genes for which expression profiles must correlated with an inflammatory disease, as encompassed by the rejected claims, and given the limited description from the instant specification of genes, the skilled artisan would not have been able to envision a sufficient number of specific embodiments to described the broadly claimed genus for combination of genes. Moreover, an applicant claiming a biotechnological invention cannot necessarily claim a genus after only describing a limited number of species, because there may be unpredictability in the results obtained from other species. Therefore, the skilled artisan would reasonably have concluded that applicants were not in possession of the claimed invention.

Response to Arguments

First, it should be noted that Applicants were not required to reduce to practice as is apparently inferred. (Remarks, p. 35, top). Rather, in meeting the written description

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requirement for a claimed genus, a representative number of species can be set forth by reduction to practice, reduction to drawings or disclosure of the relevant identifying characteristics.

Further, Applicants assert that the claims are directed to a method of identifying an agent and not a gene, protein or agent itself. (Remarks, p. 35, ¶ 2). Applicants further assert that the specification sets forth each of the steps and necessary reagents required for performing the claimed method. However, a critical element encompassed by the claimed method is a genus of expression profiles for a gene or combination of genes that specifically modulates a sterile inflammatory disease. In other words, if one of skill cannot envision a particular gene or combination of genes that are so linked then the results from an expression profile comparison would in essence be meaningless. For example, merely examining altered expression profiles for a single gene or combination of genes does not necessarily indicate that such genes are involved in modulation of a sterile inflammatory disease. Put another way, the gene(s) or combination of gene(s) must have the functionality of modulating inflammatory disease in a patient, otherwise the expression profile differential is meaningless. Since such gene(s) or combination of gene(s) have not been sufficiently disclosed, the rejection is maintained as one of skill would reasonably have concluded that Applicants were not in possession of the claimed invention.

- 2. Claim 14-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.**

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This rejection is maintained for reasons of record, which are repeated herein. A response to Applicants' arguments immediately follows below. (Infra, Response to Arguments). The test for enablement is whether one skilled in the art could make use the claimed invention from the disclosure in the specification coupled with information known in the art without undue experimentation. *United States v Telectronics Inc.*, 8 USPQ2d 1217 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Whether undue experimentation is required is not based upon a single factor but instead is a conclusion reached by weighing many factors which are outlined in *Ex parte Forman*, 230 USPQ 546 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1986) and *In re Wands*, 8 USPQ2d 1400 (Fed. Cir. 1988). The factors include the following:

Scope/Breadth of the claims. The claims are broad in scope and breadth, in that they are drawn to modulating any sterile inflammatory disease (e.g. base claim 14 and 19). In addition, even where the claims are more particular in the disease to be modulated in a patient (i.e. base claim 25; glomerulonephritis), the claims remain broad in that "modulation" of the disease can reasonably be dependent on alteration in expression profiles for an enormous number of or combinations of genes. Of course, where the claims are drawn to *any* sterile inflammatory disease, the claims are broader, simply because the genes or combination of genes would be reasonably deemed greater in number.

Nature of the invention. The invention embodies isolation of granulocyte cells, preparation of gene expression profiles from said cells, and treating cells to an agent and comparing expression profiles for treated and untreated cells, with the aim of identifying an agent that can modulate a sterile inflammatory disease in a patient.

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State of the art/Unpredictability of the art. The state of art of modulating inflammatory diseases via agents that alter expression profiles (e.g. using microarray technology) for a gene or combination of genes is in a comparatively nascent stage of development. It is not difficult to compare expression profiles for a given group of cells, but it is a wholly different proposition to ascertain which genes when altered would necessarily correlate to modulation (e.g. amelioration or exacerbation) of inflammatory diseases *in vivo*.

For example, while genes may be identified as related to inflammatory diseases, such a determination does not necessarily translate into the conclusion that agents altering expression for such genes, would necessarily “modulate” sterile inflammatory diseases. (e.g. Heller et al. PNAS, 1997 March; 94:2150-2155; using microarray technology to compare expression profiles of certain genes in tissue extracted from patients suffering from sterile inflammatory diseases; see entire document). *A priori*, in order to determine which combination of genes when altered (e.g. up or down) necessarily correlates to “modulation” of a sterile inflammatory disease, in and of itself, would be unpredictable and require substantial and undue experimentation.

Amount of guidance provided. There is no substantial guidance provided as to what gene(s) combination would necessarily correlate with “modulation” of inflammatory diseases in general or more particularly, glomerulonephritis disease. The specification prophetically suggests that neutrophils’ expression profiles from a normal subject and a patient suffering from an inflammatory disease can be compared. However, there does not appear to be any actual guidance provided as to what gene(s) would necessarily correlate to “modulation” of an inflammatory disease.

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Number of working examples. There do not appear to be any substantially relative examples provided. The specification provides an example of neutrophils (isolated from a normal subject) treated with virulent and avirulent bacteria, with subsequent comparison of gene expression profiles. (e.g. Spec., p. 26, Example 2). However, this example actually uses neutrophils from a normal donor, thus would not be relative to inflammatory diseases generally or glomerulonephritis, specifically.

Amount of Experimentation Required. The level of skill in the art required to practice the claimed invention is high. Given the unsolved hurdles to successful practicing of the invention, the level of unpredictability in the art and lack of working examples, it must be considered that the skilled artisan would be required to conduct trial and error experimentation of an undue nature in order to attempt to practice the claimed invention.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments in regard to the Enablement Rejection are grounded in the assertion that the claimed invention is directed to methods of identifying an agent that modulates the expression of gene(s) in a granulocyte population in a patient with sterile inflammatory disease. (Remarks, pp. 35-36). It is acknowledged that the claims are not directed to products so identified (i.e. agents that affect modulation of gene expression profiles). However, the claims are interpreted as broadly as reasonable in light of the full disclosure to be drawn to a method where the critical element is for one of skill to know the identity of genes that modulate a sterile inflammatory disease state in a patient. Notably the disclosure indicates that such agents can be therapeutic agents which modulate certain gene(s) or combination of gene(s).

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In other words, the expression profiles are not compared merely for the sake of comparison, but rather, to identify gene(s) expressly involved in modulation of an inflammatory disease. For example, the specification points out, "The present invention...includes methods to identify a *therapeutic* agent that modulates expression of at least one gene in a granulocyte population." (emphasis added, Specification, p. 20, l. 13; l. 26 bridging to p. 21). Therefore, the gene expressed, whichever way modulated, is deemed to have a therapeutic effect of some sort on a disease state. As Applicants state, the "invention is an assay that screens a large number of genes to identify an agent that modulates gene expression associated with sterile inflammatory disease." (Remarks, p. 35, bottom). Therefore, the genes identified *must* be associated with a disease state (i.e. modulate disease) by dint of the screening agent being therapeutic. Applicants argue that the invention is merely directed to identification of differential expression profiles, but the invention would require one of skill to determine what combination of genes are altered in what particular way (i.e. up or down) and which necessarily would correlate to a sterile inflammatory disease, since the agents being screened are stated to be therapeutic agents modulating gene(s) or combination of gene(s). That the agents being screened are *therapeutic* and that said agents modulate expression of gene(s) or combination of gene(s) is interpreted to mean that the gene(s) are necessarily involved in modulation of a sterile inflammatory disease. As such, Applicants' arguments are not deemed persuasive, thus the rejection is maintained.

Conclusion

No claims are allowed. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ramin (Ray) Akhavan whose telephone number is 571-272-0766. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Friday from 8:00-4:30. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Remy Yucel, Ph.D. can be reached on 571-272-0781. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Respectfully,

Ray Akhavan


GERRY LEFFERS
PRIMARY EXAMINER